

Angelina College
Technology and Workforce Division
ADVANCED LEGAL RESEARCH AND WRITING - LGLA 2331
Instructional Syllabus

I. BASIC COURSE INFORMATION

- A. Course Description: *(as stated in the bulletin, including necessary pre-requisite courses, credit hours)*
This course builds upon skills acquired in prior legal research and writing courses including computerized research techniques and preparation of complex legal documents such as legal office memoranda with correct citation forms. The student will analyze complex legal issues and apply effective research strategies to resolve those issues and report the results in acceptable written legal format. Three lecture hours per week with extensive outside use of law library resources.
- B. Intended Audience:
Sophomore
- C. Instructor:
Name: Dawn Armstrong
Office Location: TW-150
Office Hours: As posted or by prior appointment
Phone: 936-633-5329, cell: 936-676-2899
E-mail Address: darmstrong@angelina.edu

II. INTENDED STUDENT OUTCOMES:

A. Core Competencies – (Basic Intellectual Competencies)

1. **Reading:** Reading at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret a variety of printed materials – books, articles, and documents. A core curriculum should offer students the opportunity to master both general methods of analyzing printed materials and specific methods for analyzing the subject matter of individual disciplines.
2. **Writing:** Competency in writing is the ability to produce clear, correct, and coherent prose adapted to purpose, occasion, and audience. Although correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation are each a *sine qua non* in any composition, they do not automatically ensure that the composition itself makes sense or that the writer has much of anything to say. Students need to be familiar with the writing process including how to discover a topic and how to develop and organize it, how to phrase it effectively for their audience. These abilities can be acquired only through practice and reflection.
3. **Speaking:** Competence in speaking is the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience. Developing this competency includes acquiring poise and developing control of the language through experience in making presentations to small groups, to large groups, and through the media.
4. **Listening:** Listening at the college level means the ability to analyze and interpret various forms of spoken communication.
5. **Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking embraces methods for applying both qualitative and quantitative skills analytically and creatively to subject matter in order to evaluate arguments and to construct alternative strategies. Problem solving is one of the applications of critical thinking, used to address an identified task.
6. **Computer Literacy:** Computer literacy at the college level means the ability to use computer-based technology in communicating, solving problems, and acquiring information. Core-educated students should have an understanding of the limits, problems, and possibilities associated with the use of technology, and should have the tools necessary to evaluate and learn new technologies as they become available. (*The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. ("Report of Subcommittee on Core Curriculum", March 1, 1989).*)

- B. Exemplary Objectives –** (*Found in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Document. Titled: CORE CURRICULUM: ASSUMPTIONS AND DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS Dated: April 1998*)
N/A

C. Course Objectives for all sections –

1. Improve and expand legal research skills and legal writing skills in the advanced paralegal student.
2. Analyze and narrow complex research questions.
3. Locate and search proper research sources.
4. Determine the accuracy of search results and report those results in acceptable legal format.

D. Course Objectives as determined by the instructor –

Same as above.

III. ASSESSMENT MEASURES OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

A. Assessments for the Core Intellectual Competencies –

1. Reading – Reading will be measured by the student's demonstration of understanding and interpreting assigned reading material and written instructions.
2. Writing – Writing will be measured by the student's completion of writing assignments in clear, correct, and coherent prose.
3. Speaking – Speaking will be measured by the student's presentation of three assignments before his/her peers in a clear, accurate, and organized manner.
4. Listening – Listening will be measured by the student's appropriately interpreting spoken communication, developing appropriate responses to spoken communication.
5. Critical Thinking – Critical Thinking will be measured by the student demonstrating an ability to analyze case scenarios and applying case law or statutes to a fact situation through class assignments.
6. Computer Literacy – Computer literacy will be measured by the student's successful completion of assignments using Westlaw or Lexis.

B. Assessments for the Exemplary Objectives–

N/A

C. Assessments for Course Objectives for all sections –

1. Improve and expand legal research skills and legal writing skills in the advanced paralegal student through preparation of legal memoranda and a trial notebook.
2. Analyze and narrow complex research questions through preparation of legal memoranda and a trial notebook.
3. Locate and search proper research sources through preparation of legal memoranda and a trial notebook.
4. Determine the accuracy of search results and report those results in acceptable legal format through preparation of legal memoranda and a trial notebook.

D. Assessments for the Course Objectives as determined by the instructor –

Same as above.

IV. INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES:

A. Methodologies common to all sections

Lecture and class discussions.

B. Methodologies determined by the instructor

- A. Lecture (30%)
- B. Audio Visual Aids, as required
- C. Legal Research, online and books (50%)
- D. Open Discussion (20%)

V. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES:

A. Required Textbooks, Materials, and Equipment –

Legal Research, Analysis, and Writing, 5th edition by Joanne Banker Hames and Yvonne Ekern (Published by Pearson); Texas Rules of Form, Texas Law Review (green book); A Uniform System of Citations, Columbia Law Review (blue book)

Required equipment: flash drive and computer, there are computers in classroom

B. Assignments – *(Appropriate due dates, schedules, deadlines)*

SEE CALENDAR!! Each student will complete a minimum of three advanced legal research and writing assignments, in addition to preparation of a trial notebook, as designated by the instructor. Individual assignments are to be typed, double-spaced, and all citations are to conform to the Texas Rules of Form and Uniform System of Citation.

C. Course Policies – (This course conforms to the policies of Angelina College as stated in the Angelina College Handbook.)

Academic Assistance – If you have a disability (as cited in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 or Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) that may affect your participation in this class, you should see Karen Bowser, Room 208 of the Student Center. At a post-secondary institution, you must self-identify as a person with a disability; Ms. Bowser will assist you with the necessary information to do so.

Attendance –YOU WILL RECEIVE AN ATTENDANCE GRADE THAT MAKES UP APPROXIMATELY 15 PERCENT OF YOUR TOTAL GRADE! Students are required to attend all lectures and laboratory classes regularly and punctually. Responsibility for work missed because of illness or extracurricular activity is placed upon the student. Excessive absences are defined as three or more consecutive absences or four or more cumulative absences from regularly scheduled class periods. If you miss more than the above listed absences, I will drop you from the class, unless you have prior permission from me.

Additional Policies Established by the Individual Instructor – Assignments not received by the instructor in class on the due date will receive a zero.

VI. COURSE CONTENT:

A. Required Content/ Topics – *(common to all sections)*

Improve and expand legal research skills and legal writing skills in the advanced paralegal student with an emphasis on analyzing and narrowing complex research questions, locating and searching proper research sources, determining the accuracy of search results, and reporting those results in acceptable legal format. Emphasis will be on improving legal writing skills through the preparation of legal memoranda, trial notebook and documentation of internet research.

B. Additional Content *(as required by the individual Instructor)*

Unit 1. Reviewing Basic Research Sources

Unit 2. Periodicals and Other Secondary Sources
Lexis and other Internet Sources

Unit 3. Legislative History, Appellate Procedure, Writ and Petition History

Unit 4. Litigation Support - Development of Litigation Support
Civil and Criminal Memoranda of Authority Trial Notebook

A. Legal Memoranda will be due on the dates designated by the instructor, approximately in the 9th and 14th weeks of class

B. Presentation of Group Projects will be made on the dates designated by the instructor, approximately in the 6th week of class

C. Completion of the Trial Notebook will be expected by the 15th week of class.

VII. EVALUATION AND GRADING:

A. Grading Criteria *(percents, extra credit, etc.)*

1. The group project, including each individual's contribution, and any class assignments, will make up 20% of your grade.

2. The criminal memorandum will make up 25% of your grade.

3. The trial notebook and civil memorandum will make up will count 40% of the final grade
4. Student attendance and class participation will make up 15% of the student's final grade.

B. Determination of Grade (*assignment of letter grades*)

1. A - 90 or above
2. B - 80-89
3. C - 70-79
4. D - 60-69
5. F - 59 or lower

VIII. SYLLABUS MODIFICATION:

The instructor may modify the provisions of the syllabus to meet individual class needs by informing the class in advance as to the changes being made.